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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/790,492	03/01/2004	Lingyi A. Zheng	MIO 0082 N2/40509.292	9512

7590 10/11/2006

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EXAMINER
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THOMAS, TONIAE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2822

DATE MAILED: 10/11/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/790,492

Applicant(s)

ZHENG ET AL.

Examiner:

Toniae M. Thomas

Art Unit

2822

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 July 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 01 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. This action is in response to the amendment filed on 20 July 2006.
2. Currently, claims 1-11 are pending.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. *Claims 1 and 3-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schuegraf et al. (US 5,624,865) in view of Lee et al. (US 2002/0068466 A1) and Thakur (US 5,407,534).*

The Schuegraf et al. patent (Schuegraf) discloses a process for forming a memory cell (figs. 4-9 and accompanying text). The method comprises: forming a semiconductor structure defining a transistor 46 and a pair of transistor node locations 44 in a semiconductor substrate 40 (fig. 4 and col. 5, lines 5-8); forming an insulating layer 50 over the semiconductor substrate, wherein in one preferred embodiment the insulating layer is BPSG (fig. 5 and col. 5, lines 15-25); forming a container 54 in the insulating layer over one of the transistor node locations (fig. 5 and col. 5, lines 15-25); forming a polysilicon lower electrode layer 58 along an inner surface of the container, wherein in one preferred embodiment the polysilicon is HSG polysilicon (fig. 6; col. 5, lines 27-

Art Unit: 2822

34; and col. 5, lines 40-48); forming a dielectric layer 64 characterized by a given degree of uniformity over the polysilicon lower electrode layer and an upper surface of the insulating layer, wherein in a preferred embodiment the dielectric layer is a silicon nitride layer and has a thickness that is sufficient to prevent oxidation punch-through from a reoxidized layer 68 formed over the dielectric layer to the polysilicon lower electrode layer (fig. 8; col. 6, lines 1-4; col. 10, lines 9-11; and col. 6, lines 19-21); and forming an upper electrode layer 72 over the reoxidized layer 68 (fig. 9 and col. 6, lines 21-28). The silicon nitride layer may have a thickness less than about 50 angstroms (col. 6, lines 19-21).

As pointed out in the previous action mailed on 20 April 2006, the lower electrode layer 58 is formed so as to extend along an upper surface of the insulating layer 50 and from the inner surface 48 in the direction of the upper surface of the insulating layer along an extension of the container 54 (see fig. 7).

The dielectric layer 64 is formed on the lower electrode layer (see fig. 8).

Schuegraf lacks anticipation of forming the silicon nitride dielectric layer 64 through an atomic layer deposition (ALD) process, wherein a silicon-containing precursor is chemisorbed over a surface of the lower electrode layer and a nitrogen-containing precursor is reacted with the chemisorbed silicon-containing precursor to form the silicon nitride dielectric layer, and wherein a substantially flat temperature distribution is maintained across the substrate

as the silicon-containing precursor is chemisorbed, and as the nitrogen-containing precursor is reacted with the chemisorbed silicon-containing precursor. Schuegraf also lacks anticipation of forming the lower electrode layer such that it extends beyond the inner surface of the container.

The Lee et al. application publication (referred to hereinafter as Lee) is relied upon in this rejection because the reference teaches forming a silicon nitride dielectric layer through an ALD process (see figs. 2A-2F and accompanying text). Lee discloses an ALD method for depositing a silicon nitride layer, wherein after loading a semiconductor substrate into a reaction chamber (par. 25, lines 4-9), a silicon-containing precursor is chemisorbed over a surface of the substrate (fig. 2A and par. 25, lines 9-13), and then a nitrogen-containing precursor is reacted with the chemisorbed silicon-containing precursor to form a silicon nitride dielectric layer (fig. 2E and par. 27, lines 1-6). During the ALD process, the reaction chamber is maintained at a temperature of about 450°C (par. 25, lines 4-9), ergo a substantially flat temperature distribution is maintained across the substrate while the silicon-containing precursor is chemisorbed over the substrate surface and while the nitrogen-containing precursor is reacted with the chemisorbed silicon-containing precursor. The resulting silicon nitride is about 2 angstroms thick (par. 28, lines 1-11); however, the ALD process may be repeated until a desired thickness is achieved (par. 28, lines 4-11). Furthermore, the resulting silicon

nitride layer is a high quality film having good step coverage (par. 28, lines 4-8).

Thakur is relied upon in this rejection because the patent reference teaches forming a lower electrode layer such that it extends beyond the inner surface of a container (see figs. 2-4 and accompanying text). Thakur discloses a process for forming a capacitor, wherein the method comprises: forming a semiconductor structure defining a transistor 21 and a transistor node location 24 in a semiconductor substrate 20 (fig. 2 and col. 3, lines 33-35); forming a BPSG insulating layer 22 over the semiconductor substrate 20 (fig. 2 and col. 3, lines 35-38); forming a container in the insulating layer over the transistor node location (fig. 2 and col. 3, lines 38-39); and forming a lower electrode layer 23 along an inner surface of the container (figs. 2, 3 and col. 3, lines 39-51). The lower electrode layer 23 extends beyond the inner surface of the container (figs. 2, 3 and col. 3, lines 39-42).

As compared with conventional chemical vapor deposition (CVD) methods, for example low-pressure chemical vapor deposition (LPCVD), thin films deposited using ALD methods have excellent step coverage and uniformity (Lee - par. 3, line 8 - par. 5, line 7). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to modify Schuegraf by forming the silicon nitride layer using an ALD process, as taught by Lee, since thin films deposited using ALD have excellent step coverage and uniformity.

Both Schuegraf and Thakur disclose a process for forming a memory cell in a dynamic random access memory (DRAM) device, the memory cell comprising a storage node capacitor, wherein the storage capacitor has as its storage node capacitor cell plate an HSG polysilicon lower electrode layer connected to a transistor node. As Thakur points out, "in dynamic semiconductor memory storage devices it is essential that storage node capacitor cell plates be large enough to retain an adequate charge (or capacitance) in spite of parasitic capacitances and noise that may be present during circuit operation" (Thakur - col. 1, lines 27-32). The surface area of the storage node capacitor cell plate is directly proportional to capacitance, that is, increasing the surface area of the cell plate increases capacitance ( $C = \epsilon\epsilon_0 A/d$ ). Thus, it follows that forming the lower electrode layer to extend beyond the surface of the container increases the surface area of the cell plate and, thereby increases capacitance. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to modify Schuegraf by forming the lower electrode layer so that it extends beyond the surface of the container, as taught by Thakur, since doing so increases the surface area of the storage node capacitor cell plate and thereby increases capacitance.

***Response to Arguments***

4. *Applicants' arguments filed on 20 July 2006 have been fully considered, but are not persuasive.*

Art Unit: 2822

In the arguments filed on 20 July 2006, Applicants' allege that:

There is no teaching or suggestion that the desirability of increased surface area would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to extend an electrode layer, for example, an HSG polysilicon layer, outside the container as claimed.

One having ordinary skill in the art would have been lead to increase surface area by extending the lower electrode, as taught by Thakur, for one practical reason: to conserve substrate real estate.

Applicants further allege that:

Thakur teaches away from extending the electrode layer outside the surface of the container.

Thakur is relied upon solely because the patent reference teaches: forming a BPSG insulating layer 22 over a semiconductor substrate 20, the BPSG layer having a container formed therein; and forming a lower electrode layer 23 along an inner surface of the container, such that the lower electrode layer 23 *extends beyond the inner surface of the container*. As stated previously in the Office action mailed on 20 April 2006, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to modify Schuegraf by forming the lower electrode layer so that it extends beyond the surface of the container, as taught by Thakur, since doing so increases the surface area of the storage node capacitor cell plate and thereby increases capacitance.

### **Conclusion**

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.**



See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Toniae M. Thomas whose telephone number is (571) 272-1846. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Zandra Smith can be reached on (571) 272-2429. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

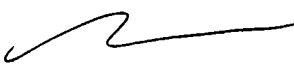
Application/Control Number: 10/790,492

Page 9

Art Unit: 2822

TMT

30 September 2006



M. Wilczewski  
Primary Examiner  
TC 2800